

# TELEGRAM

Foreign Service of the  
United States of America

INCOMING

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA DEF-6

ACTION  
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Recd:

JAN 29, 1970

R 281830Z JAN 70

FM [REDACTED] EO50x1

TO RUCRJCS/DIA  
INFO RUEAOWD/QACSI DA  
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC  
RUESEI/AMCONSUL RECIFE  
RULPAL/USCINCSO (J-2)  
RULPAK/USARSO (G-2)  
RUESUZ/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA  
RUESUP/AMCONSUL SAO PAULO  
RUCRJCS/OJCS  
RUCRJCS/QASD ISA  
ZEN/AMCONSUL PORTO ALEGRE  
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ACTION TAKEN *Se*

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1. (C) IN VIEW OF PROLIFERATION OF DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL ALLEGATIONS OF WIDESPREAD USE OF TORTURE BY BRAZILIAN SECURITY OFFICIALS, THIS OFFICE CONDUCTS CONTINUING AND COMPREHENSIVE SOUNDINGS ON ISSUE. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] HAVE BEEN ENGAGED IN DISCUSSION ON THE MATTER OF TACTICS EMPLOYED BY SECURITY FORCES IN DEALING WITH TERRORISTS AND DETAINEES IN GENERAL. INQUIRIES ALSO HAVE BEEN MADE TO DETERMINE WHETHER SEVERE BEATINGS, ELECTRIC SHOCKS, AND SIMILAR FORMS OF PRIMITIVE SAVAGERY ARE UTILIZED ON A SYSTEMATIC BASIS WITH THE KNOWLEDGE AND APPROVAL OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. THE ANSWERS HAVE BEEN A RESOUNDING "NO".

2. (C) THE CURRENT CAMPAIGN OF ALLEGATIONS OF TORTURE IS INTERPRETED BY BRAZILIAN OFFICIALS AS PART OF AN INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT DESIGNED TO TARNISH THE REPUTATION OF NON-COMMUNIST GOVERNMENTS. MANY OF THESE SAME OFFICIALS CITE AS EVIDENCE THE EXPLOITATION OF THE ALLEGED MYLAI MASSACRE; THE READY CRIES OF "POLICE BRUTALITY" IN THE UNITED STATES AND FABRICATED BY COMMERCIALY PROFITABLE RHETORIC CONCERNING INDIAN MASSACRES IN BRAZIL'S HINTERLAND. MOREOVER, THEY BELIEVE THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT THE "TORTURE" THEME HAS BEEN CONVERTED INTO A VERITABLE COMMODITY WHICH SMALL BUT DEADLY GROUPS OF BRAZILIAN EXTREMISTS, PURGED POLITICIANS, AND OPPOSITION ELEMENTS IN GENERAL EXCHANGE FOR MAXIMUM

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IMPACT IN THE NEWS MEDIA OR IN PAMPHLETS. THUS, A WIDELY DISSEMINATED PAMPHLET ADDRESSED TO MILITARY MEN BY ARMY DESERTER EX-CAPTAIN LAMARCA, USES THE WORD "TORTURE" SIX TIMES AND "ATROCITIES" THREE TIMES. FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS IN RIO DE JANEIRO CAN, FOR THE ASKING, ARRANGE CLANDESTINE "PRESS CONFERENCES" WITH EXTREMISTS IDENTIFIED WITH OUTLAWED STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS. REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE, AND NEWSWEEK HAVE DISCUSSED SUCH CLANDESTINE MEETINGS WITH EMBASSY OFFICERS AND HAVE DISPLAYED SKEPTICISM OVER THE PREDICTABLE TALES OF "TORTURE".

3. (S) IN DISCUSSING THE TORTURE ALLEGATIONS, MOST BRAZILIAN OFFICIALS REVIEW THE CASE OF THE 15 POLITICAL PRISONERS EXCHANGED FOR AMBASSADOR ELERICK ON 6 SEPTEMBER 1969. AUTHORITIES POINT OUT THAT, AMONG THE 15, STUDENT LEADERS LUIS TRAVASSOS, JOSE DIRCEU, AND VLADIMIR PALMEIRA, HAD BEEN MENTIONED OFTEN AS THE VICTIMS OF SAVAGE ATROCITIES WHICH, AT THE MINIMUM, WOULD MAIM THEM FOR LIFE OR EVEN LEAD TO EARLY DEATHS. THE SAME WAS SAID OF 70-YEAR OLD GREGORIO BEZERRA, VICIOUS MURDERER OF MANY CITIZENS IN NORTHEASTERN BRAZIL. STILL ANOTHER PRISONER, NEWSPAPERMAN FLAVIO TAVARES, WAS THE SUBJECT OF WIDESPREAD REPORTS THAT HE HAD BEEN CASTRAIED. YET, DESPITE ALL OF THE "TORTURE" STORIES WITH VARYING SOUNDS OF ROMANTICISM AND TRUTH, THE FIFTEEN - WHO WERE IDENTIFIED WITH ONLY 48-HOURS ADVANCE NOTICE - WERE ABLE TO BOARD THE AIRCRAFT UNAIDED AND EVEN POSE FOR PICTURES. MOREOVER, OFFICIALS CONTEND, THEY WENT TO MEXICO AND SUBSEQUENTLY TO HAVANA, WHERE READY AUDIENCES EXISTED FOR THE DISPLAY OF ANY BRUISE OR WELT, AND, TO THIS DATE, HAVE FAILED TO EXHIBIT ANYTHING MORE THAN THE PIOUS PRATTLE OF THEIR IDEOLOGICAL INVOLVEMENT.

4. (S) ON THE BASIS OF THE FOREGOING AND OTHER INDICATORS, THE FOLLOWING CONCLUSIONS APPEAR REASONABLE:

A. "INSTITUTIONALIZED TORTURE" (THE SYSTEMATIC, WIDESPREAD, AND OFFICIALLY SANCTIONED USE OF FORCE TO ELICIT INFORMATION FROM TERRORISTS) DOES NOT EXIST IN BRAZIL AND IS VIEWED WITH REPUGNANCE BY MOST SECURITY OFFICIALS.

B. SOME FORMS OF "THIRD-DEGREE" PERSUASION ARE

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APPLIED ON A SELECTIVE BASIS TO KNOWN OR SUSPECTED  
TERRORISTS.

C. THE LIMITED EMPLOYMENT OF PHYSICAL PRESSURE  
CONTINUES TO PRODUCE RELIABLE INTELLIGENCE WHICH IMPROVED  
COORDINATION AMONG SECURITY ELEMENTS SUCCESSFULLY HAS  
TRANSLATED INTO PROFOUND INROADS INTO THE CAPABILITIES  
OF TERRORISTS. OFFICIALS FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT INNOCENT  
LIVES ARE THUS BEING SAVED.

D. THERE IS NO EVIDENCE OF SUSPECTED TERRORISTS  
AMONG THE CLERGY BEING SINGLED OUT AS TARGETS FOR FORCE-  
FUL PERSUASION.

E. DESPITE PARTIALLY SUCCESSFUL OFFICIAL RESTRAINTS  
ON THE PUBLICATION OF SUCH STORIES, THE "TORTURE" THEME  
DOES NOT APPEAR TO HAVE GENERATED ANY RESPONSE AMONG THE  
POPULATION AS A WHOLE, EVEN THOUGH CONSIDERABLE  
APPREHENSION HAS BEEN REGISTERED AMONG SEGMENTS OF THE  
EDUCATED CLASS.

F. THERE IS NO SUBSTANTIVE EVIDENCE OF DISAGREEMENT  
AMONG SECURITY OFFICIALS OVER TACTICS OR THE TECHNIQUES  
IN DEALING WITH TERRORISTS.

5. (C) THE GOVERNMENT HAD INVESTIGATED NUMEROUS  
ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSES BY SECURITY OFFICIALS AND ARMY  
HQs, FOR INSTANCE, DISPATCHES INVESTIGATORS ON AN  
UNANNOUNCED BASIS TO CHECK ON THE TREATMENT OF INDIVIDUALS  
HELD AT MILITARY UNITS.

6. (U) THIS MESSAGE HAS BEEN COORDINATED WITH THE  
POLITICAL SECTION, EO50X1 GP-3.  
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